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SPECIAL POLITICAL AND
DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE
(FOURTH COMMITTEE)
5th meeting
held on
Friday, 15 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

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1. Mr. WAQANISAU (Fiji) said that when the General Assembly had adopted resolution 46/181, thereby endorsing the plan of action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the United Nations had set itself a time-limit to eradicate all forms of colonialism by the year 2000.

2. For that reason, the peoples of the Territories under colonial administration must be given the opportunity to exercise their inalienable right to choose their future free from outside interference. Once the people had exercised that right, their choice must be respected, whether they had opted for independence, integration, free association or any other acceptable outcome of a legitimate act of self-determination. In that connection, he emphasized the important role that the administering Powers must assume in educating and guiding the people living in those Territories so that they would understand every aspect of the choices presented to them. To that end, visiting missions should continue to be sent to the Territories. He commended New Zealand on its initiative and called on other administering Powers to follow its example and extend invitations to the United Nations to send visiting missions to the Territories under their administration.

3. His delegation maintained that not all foreign economic interests were self-serving and unscrupulous. Some, while pursuing profit, also contributed in very significant ways to the development of the country in which they operated. In that connection, he commended the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (CTC) for its work in improving relations between the transnational

(Mr. Waqanisau, Fiji)

corporations and the host countries. It should not be forgotten, however, that other foreign interests inherited by Non-Self-Governing Territories had had a destabilizing influence on the attainment of independence. He therefore called on the administering Powers to take fully into account the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/15 which spelled out the obligations of foreign economic interests towards the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

4. On the question of South Africa, his delegation welcomed the dramatic changes that were taking place in that country, and considered it only proper for the Committee to review all resolutions relating to apartheid in order to bring them into line with those changes. He also hoped that the elections scheduled for April 1994 would constitute a giant step towards democracy and true independence for the people of South Africa.

5. Fiji also welcomed the developments in New Caledonia leading up to the referendum scheduled for 1998. The outcome of the mid-term review of the Matignon Agreement and the continuing support for the process by the Government of France were encouraging. However, his delegation would like to see some balance restored to the Territory's economy, as stipulated in the Agreement. The regular visits to the Territory by representatives of the authorities of the South Pacific Forum countries should continue as a means of monitoring progress in the implementation of the programme of action set out in the Matignon Agreement.

6. Most of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were small island countries with insignificant populations and limited natural resources, but those factors should not serve as a pretext for the administering Powers to delay the exercise by those peoples of their right to self-determination.

7. He again called on the administering Powers to continue or resume their participation in future meetings and activities of the Special Committee and to ensure the participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in its work. Otherwise, the objective of the Decade's agenda could not be attained.

8. Mr. HAINE (Marshall Islands), speaking on behalf of the States members of the South Pacific Forum, referred to the position with regard to New Caledonia taken by the Forum at its twenty-fourth session, held at Nauru on 10 and 11 August 1993. At that session, the Forum had endorsed a report on New Caledonia prepared by the Forum's Ministerial Committee and had expressed its appreciation to the Ministers and to the French and territorial authorities for their cooperation in facilitating the visit. The Forum had reaffirmed its support for the aspirations and goals of the people of New Caledonia, including the Kanak community. In that connection, it had noted the positive measures being pursued by the French authorities, in cooperation with all sectors of the population, with a view to establishing a framework for the self-determination of New Caledonia. The Forum had also concluded that transparency in the electoral process and continued dialogue among all parties were essential to ensure that the act of self-determination was consistent with the principles and practices of the United Nations, and that all options, including independence, were open and the rights of the indigenous Kanaks and the other indigenous communities in New Caledonia were safeguarded.

(Mr. Haine, Marshall Islands)

9. The Forum had reiterated its hope that France would facilitate the dispatch of United Nations visiting missions to New Caledonia. It had also urged that contacts between New Caledonia and the countries of the Forum should be strengthened, in particular through greater participation by representatives of the Territory in committees, workshops and seminars organized by the Secretariat.

10. Finally, he noted that the Forum had endorsed the text of the draft resolution on New Caledonia appearing in document A/48/23 (Part VII) and recommended that the Committee should adopt it by consensus.

11. Mr. SINHASENI (Thailand) said that his country had always been an advocate of the principle of equal rights and self-determination embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and would continue working with other countries to eliminate colonialism by the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In that regard, he welcomed the merger of the Special Political and Fourth Committees as part of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and as an indication that the decolonization process would soon be completed. Thailand was keenly aware of the intimate links between democracy, development and human rights. It therefore believed that the decolonization process must combine political measures with economic development measures. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the report of the Special Committee on decolonization, which urged the specialized agencies, other organizations of the United Nations system and the regional organizations to formulate assistance programmes for the remaining Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories in order to accelerate economic and social progress in those Territories.

12. Special attention should be given to the fragile economies of the Non-Self-Governing small island Territories in order to help them attain self-sustainable economies after the completion of decolonization. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund also had an important role to play in initiating technical programmes for natural resources management in those Territories to ensure the diversification of their economies.

13. Thailand strongly believed that education and human resources were vital to achieving both economic sovereignty and development, and it continued to provide educational and training assistance to several developing countries, including the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

14. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that significant progress had been made in implementing General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960. The support of the international community had helped to accelerate the decolonization process in several regions of the world. In particular, the Special Committee had helped peoples in their struggle for the right to self-determination and independence. Since its establishment in 1961 over 60 colonial territories had become States Members of the United Nations. However, the peoples of other territories had not yet achieved independence or expressed their desire with regard to their future political status, and they should be given attention by the international community in order to realize their legitimate aspirations.

(Mr. Abdellah, Tunisia)

15. He therefore urged the Special Committee to continue supporting the peoples of those Territories in order to help them exercise their right to choose thestatus that best corresponded to their wishes. He noted that the Special Committee could not find solutions by itself to the problems covered in its mandate, and his country therefore hoped that the administering Powers that were not participating in the meetings of the Special Committee or in those of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance should reconsider their position and decide to cooperate fully with both bodies.

16. His delegation also considered it important for the administering Powers to agree to receive visiting missions in their Territories, and it commended New Zealand for its ongoing cooperation with the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance in seeking a solution to the question of Tokelau.

17. He drew attention to the need to intensify communications between the Territories concerned and the United Nations in order to keep the peoples of the Territories informed of the measures being adopted on their behalf. In that connection, the representatives of the Territories should increase their participation in the work of the Special Committee and the seminars on decolonization that it organized; they should be given financial aid to facilitate that participation.

18. Improving the living conditions of the peoples of the Territories should be a part of the decolonization process. The administering Powers should prevent any abuses that might result from the unchecked development of the Territories' natural resources. It should also provide for the Territories' security, in order to prevent their being used for military purposes against other territories or for purposes such as nuclear testing, nuclear-waste dumping or nuclear-weapon deployment.

19. With regard to the changes taking place in South Africa, he said that the April 1994 elections would be a historic moment, in which the people of South Africa would be able for the first time to express its political will. To that end, the people of South Africa must have the support of the international community in achieving a democratic, non-racial system. The lifting of the economic sanctions against South Africa was an appropriate measure, but it should be kept in mind that the situation in the country was still precarious and that it would require continued vigilance on the part of the international community.

20. Mr. RODRIGO (Sri Lanka) said that colonialism was in its terminal stage: of the approximately 60 Non-Self-Governing Territories that had existed in the early 1960s, only a dozen or so remained.

21. Colonialism had not been completely eradicated, however. If most of the Non-Self-Governing Territories had small populations and scant resources, each one nevertheless had a distinctive identity. The United Nations, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee should continue to be sensitive to those differences in the current final phase of colonialism.

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

22. The radical changes that had swept the world in the last decade had not been entirely beneficial. Nevertheless, mention should be made of the decision to hold elections in April 1994 in South Africa, which would help to bring about a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa and the final extinction of apartheid.

23. The administering Powers had the main responsibility for ensuring that the Non-Self-Governing Territories experienced a smooth transition from colonialism. To that end, direct transparent dialogue between the two parties was vital. The United Nations should continue to play a catalytic role in that dialogue, with the interests of the people in the Territories being held paramount. That was the moral injunction contained in Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations.

24. Some delegations had argued that the exercise of self-determination did not necessarily lead to independence and that other options were available. What was important for his delegation was that the views and feelings of the people of a Non-Self-Governing Territory should remain the supreme and paramount factor in that decision. There, too, the United Nations could play a major role in ensuring that acts of self-determination were fair and free from undue pressures on those expressing their views.

25. It was also important to distinguish between a genuine expression of the views of a people and the promotion through force and terror of the extreme views of narrowly based groups claiming to represent the wishes of the people. The concept of self-determination in some non-colonial situations had been used to promote the extremist demands of armed separatist groups.

26. Finally, he hoped that given the favourable conditions at the present time, the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism would live up to the ambitious title proclaimed to mark it.

27. Mr. McKINNON (New Zealand) said that the Special Committee's mandate covered 18 territories. That number was a measure both of how much it had done and of how much it still had to do. Of the 29 States that had been admitted to membership in the United Nations in the past decade, only a handful had been Non-Self-Governing Territories. There was a risk that the remaining 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories might become for ever frozen in categories that had long vanished from the rest of the world.

28. The Assembly had declared the 1990s the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and under that head the Special Committee had undertaken a range of activities, including the Pacific Regional Seminar on decolonization, held in Papua New Guinea in June 1993. The report of the Seminar (A/AC.109/1159) contained a wealth of very useful material and a number of important proposals that would be taken into account by the Special Committee, as its Chairman had already stated.

29. Many of the smaller Territories faced special difficulties that the United Nations needed to recognize and take into consideration in responding to them. In that connection, he wished to draw the attention of the Committee to a

(Mr. McKinnon, New Zealand)

contribution made at the Seminar by Mrs. Alison Quentin-Baxter, who had outlined a concept of "sustained autonomy" and had suggested that it should be seen as a new model of self-government that combined elements of both free association and integration.

30. With respect to Tokelau, New Zealand's position as an administering Power was well known. His country's commitment to decolonization was a matter of principle, and it had always supported the inalienable right of a Territory to self-determination. When the people of Tokelau were ready, New Zealand would actively support it in attaining a greater degree of self-government and economic self-sufficiency. Decisions on self-determination should be made by the local people, not the administering Power.

31. The Government of New Zealand also welcomed the fact that the Special Committee had accepted its invitation to dispatch another visiting mission to Tokelau in the first half of 1994, which would provide a valuable opportunity for representatives of the United Nations to discuss recent developments in the Territory with the local leaders.

32. With regard to New Caledonia, his delegation fully endorsed the statement made by the Chairman of the South Pacific Forum and agreed that the Matignon Agreement continued to offer the best prospects for the political future and economic development of New Caledonia.

33. He welcomed the merging of the Special Political Committee and the Fourth Committee and thought that the streamlining of procedures was valuable. He also welcomed the decision to hold a single general debate and to consolidate the decisions into a single text.

34. Lastly, he said that a further positive development in the work of the Committee would be for there to be greater balance in the language of its draft resolutions. New Zealand was wholeheartedly committed to supporting the goals of the United Nations in the field of decolonization, and it would like to be in a position during the forty-eighth session to accept and vote for appropriately worded resolutions. It also favoured consensus on other decolonization texts in the Committee.

35. Mrs. VARGAS (Nicaragua) said that, as the President of the United States of America, William Clinton, had stated, there was indeed a great desire among the peoples of the world to be the masters of their own economic and political lives. While the desire of many peoples to rule their own destiny had become a reality, that desire remained unfulfilled among the peoples of the many countries that were still subject to colonial domination and whose names appeared on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories that the General Assembly and the Fourth Committee had been considering for many years.

36. The Secretary-General stated in his report on the work of the Organization that democratization was one of the key concepts for encouraging the flowering of development and achieving peace in the world. Her delegation saw a link between that concept and the principles and values of independence, self-determination and national sovereignty for all peoples. Nicaragua, which

(Mrs. Vargas, Nicaragua)

had finally been able to establish a democratic Government, thought that it was impossible to speak of democracy or the democratization of international relations when such fundamental elements as a nation's independence and sovereignty were still being watered down, as in the case of the peoples who remained subject to colonial domination.

37. She hoped that those peoples that were still subject to foreign domination or under colonial rule would be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination and to become a part of the international community represented in the United Nations as soon as possible.

38. As to the handling of decolonization issues, it was necessary for the Special Committee to readjust its focus to keep up with the times. That was why seminars such as the one held in June 1993 in Papua New Guinea were extremely important, since they allowed the Special Committee to learn firsthand the opinions of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The results and proposals of those seminars should be incorporated in the decisions of the Assembly.

39. It was important for the Special Committee to collaborate on enabling the Non-Self-Governing Territories to participate as observers in the various conferences and organs of the United Nations. Equally important, the Special Committee's efforts to revise its working procedures must strike a chord with the administering Powers, without whose cooperation the Special Committee would be hard-pressed to achieve its objectives. One example of such cooperation was New Zealand's invitation to the Committee to visit Tokelau in 1994. It was also important to regulate foreign immigration to Non-Self-Governing Territories in order to prevent changes in their demographic composition, since such changes hindered decolonization.

40. Nicaragua supported the resumption of direct talks between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), which would enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise its right to self-determination. Similarly, it was convinced that the prevailing spirit of dialogue between Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland would make it possible to arrive at a satisfactory solution to the situation in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

41. Mr. ZVANKO (Belarus) praised the decision to merge the Special Political Committee and the Fourth Committee in order to create a new Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee). Because of that decision, the work of the Fourth Committee had become much more complex and included a much greater number of questions in a wide variety of fields. It would require constant effort to ensure the success of the Committee's work during the forty-eighth session. Belarus promised to cooperate fully with the other delegations in order to achieve that objective.

42. The exemplary service of the United Nations in the field of decolonization was well known. In the 30 years since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, undeniable progress had been made. The number of Non-Self-Governing Territories had declined from 64 in 1961 to 18 in 1992.

(Mr. Zvanko, Belarus)

43. In that connection, his delegation wished to highlight the efforts of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In the current and final stage of world-wide decolonization, the Special Committee's task had become not simpler but more complex, as seen from the process in Namibia that led to its independence. Much remained to be achieved under the head of United Nations decolonization activities. The International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism provided the appropriate context for the successful conclusion of the decolonization process throughout the world.

44. Among those peoples who were still unable to exercise their right to self-determination and independence, the peoples of the small island States of the Caribbean and the Pacific merited special mention. Despite their similarities, their political, social and economic conditions were quite different and in order to resolve their problems, it was necessary to apply criteria suited to the specific characteristics of each State.

45. In that connection, more information should be disseminated in order to mobilize world public opinion in support of the peoples of the colonial countries in their efforts to achieve self-determination, freedom and independence. One of the main tasks of the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) should be to give the widest possible publicity to information on decolonization. Belarus accordingly supported the Special Committee's proposal that DPI should systematically emphasize that the decolonization process was not over and that in its activities, the United Nations needed to give priority to the issue of decolonization until the objectives set forth in the Declaration on decolonization had been achieved. In that connection, the dual role which had to be played by the administering Powers would be decisive: to promote the political process leading towards self-determination and to help create the economic conditions necessary for the independent development of the States in question. That process should be carried out under conditions of the most rigorous respect for the principles and norms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which must be applied to all States without distinction as to the size of their territory, their population, or their economic potential. The United Nations, and the Special Committee in particular, should coordinate that process.

46. Mr. LOTFI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the decolonization process represented one of the most important successes in the history of the United Nations. Through the efforts of the Organization, more than 50 Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories had been able to exercise their right to self-determination and independence in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). In his delegation's view, until there had been total elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and an end to all violations of the fundamental rights of the peoples in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the United Nations should be guided by that resolution in the area of decolonization, in particular in the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

47. Economic relations were important elements in that connection. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should strengthen their programmes of

(Mr. Lotfi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

assistance to the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories with a view to promoting their political, economic, social and educational development. The administering Powers were responsible for protecting the natural resources of the Non-Self-Governing Territories as they rightfully belonged to the peoples of those territories. Furthermore, there should be no military activities or military bases established in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly.

48. His country welcomed the positive developments in South Africa and the substantial progress that had been made towards eliminating apartheid, including the scheduling of the first free elections, to be held in April 1994. Nevertheless, the international community, and the United Nations in particular, must not overlook the fact that apartheid had not been completely eradicated. The international community should therefore continue to monitor the situation in South Africa until apartheid was eradicated and a democratic, non-racial and united society had been established in that country.

49. Mr. VALEV (Bulgaria) said that the number of States Members of the United Nations had more than tripled owing in large part to the Organization's efforts in the area of decolonization, which had enabled many peoples to fulfil their aspirations to self-determination, sovereignty and national independence.

50. Despite that remarkable progress, much remained to be done. There were still 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories in the world. His delegation hoped that during the final decade of the twentieth century, all the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories would exercise, in one form or another, the right to self-determination. Bulgaria was ready, as it had always been, to cooperate in efforts to achieve that objective.

51. In recent years there had been a clear general trend in the direction of strengthening democracy and respect for human rights. In the United Nations those changes had created a climate favourable to mutual understanding and cooperation. It was to be hoped that the new climate of cooperation would have a positive impact on the work being carried out by the Fourth Committee and the other bodies of the United Nations competent in the field of decolonization. His country urged all Member States and the United Nations as a whole to prevent issues relating to the Non-Self-Governing Territories from becoming an "apple of discord" between the North and the South or among the countries of the South.

52. The United Nations and the administering Powers should focus their attention on the real and specific problems of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, facilitate the creation of the economic, social and political conditions favourable to decolonization and help those Territories to make better use of regional economic, trade and financial mechanisms.

53. His delegation was disappointed with the texts of some draft resolutions and decisions contained in the Special Committee's report, in particular the draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization by the specialized agencies, the draft resolution on foreign economic interests and the draft decision on military activities. It had hoped that the Special

(Mr. Valev, Bulgaria)

Committee would adopt a more flexible and practical approach which would make it possible to approve or adopt those texts by consensus, but, as they stood, those texts bore the mark of past controversies and were burdened with outdated and confrontational language and irrelevant issues. It was to be hoped that the ongoing consultations would bear fruit, producing acceptable draft resolutions that served the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

54. Mr. OVALLE (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela), said that he welcomed the restructuring of the United Nations, which had resulted in a merger of two General Assembly Committees to form the present Special Committee on decolonization. The restructuring process was continuing and merited special attention. In that context, the Rio Group welcomed the recent developments in South Africa and the Middle East.

55. The changing world made it incumbent on the Fourth Committee to approach its task realistically, with a view to achieving the rapid and effective liquidation of colonialism in all its forms. The United Nations had expressed that ideal for the first time more than 33 years ago when the General Assembly had, by its resolution 1514 (XV), adopted the Declaration on decolonization. The Rio Group solemnly reaffirmed its commitment to the process of decolonization and its support for the productive efforts of the United Nations, as carried out by the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee.

56. The progress thus far was very satisfactory but much remained to be done. In that connection, the Rio Group countries also reiterated their support for General Assembly resolution 43/47 declaring the period 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The administering Powers had a responsibility for achieving that goal and for furthering the economic and social advancement of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Whatever information on the Territories was transmitted by the administering Powers under Article 73 (e) of the Charter of the United Nations was crucially important if other countries were to give the Territories the most effective possible support.

57. Chile reiterated its request to the administering Powers that they should cooperate with the United Nations and allow periodic visiting missions to the Territories. Chile was pleased that New Zealand had invited a visiting mission to travel to Tokelau early in 1994 and hoped that the other administering Powers would follow its example.

58. Chile also hoped that the current status of the bilateral relations between Argentina and the United Kingdom would allow a peaceful, just and lasting solution to be found as soon as possible to the controversy over the Malvinas (Falkland Islands).

59. With regard to Western Sahara, Chile strongly appealed to the parties involved to try, in cooperation with the Secretary-General, to resolve pending issues and to make preparations for the referendum of self-determination called for in the settlement plan and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

(Mr. Ovalle, Chile)

60. Chile also believed that the conciliatory dialogue and good faith of the parties on the question of New Caledonia set the stage, within the framework of the Matignon Agreement, for the inhabitants of that Territory to legitimately exercise their right to self-determination.

61. Chile reiterated its support for talks between the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal in order to find a just and lasting solution to the question of East Timor. It also expressed appreciation to the Government of Papua New Guinea for having hosted the Pacific Regional Seminar in Port Moresby in June 1993.

62. The administering Powers had an obligation to foster the sustainable development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, ensure the protection of the environment, keep the Territories and adjacent areas from being used for nuclear testing or for the stockpiling of nuclear arms or weapons of mass destruction, avoid using the Territories for criminal purposes such as illicit drug trafficking or the laundering of proceeds from drug sales, and prevent the contamination of the marine environment from which they derived a good part of their food resources.

63. Mr. GRIFFIN (Australia) said that he welcomed the merger of the former Special Political and Fourth Committees. The new Committee faced a particularly difficult challenge because the decolonization mechanism of the United Nations was clearly in crisis. A majority of administering Powers, responsible for the majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, did not cooperate with the Special Committee on decolonization. Moreover, one regional group was no longer represented on the Special Committee and other members had repeatedly made clear their disenchantment with the tenor of the Special Committee's deliberations and decisions. Key resolutions on the decolonization process, such as those on foreign economic interests and the role of the specialized agencies, not only failed to attract consensus but were adopted by dwindling majorities. That unsatisfactory situation damaged the credibility of the United Nations as it went forward with decolonization and became deplorable when it was recalled that most of the remaining Territories were small, isolated and vulnerable island communities in the South Pacific and the Caribbean, which required handling appropriate to their particular circumstances by the United Nations.

64. Australia was a friend of the decolonization process and of the Fourth Committee, and was conscious of the fact that any failure to refine and update the work of the Committee would have direct implications on a number of Australia's near neighbours in the South Pacific.

65. With the successful decolonization of Namibia, the principal argument for the inclusion of references to apartheid in United Nations resolutions had been the contention that South Africa represented a colonial situation. However, it was time to set that argument aside. Apart from the question of whether apartheid was a colonial situation or not, the descendants of the colonizers and the descendants of the colonized were clearly and irreversibly on the road to a non-racial, democratic future. There could be no justification for the Committee to continue to include references to apartheid in its resolutions and

(Mr. Griffin, Australia)

decisions. Australia took note of the consultations currently under way with a view to amending the draft resolutions received from the Special Committee to take account of the changed situation in South Africa.

66. The second issue which had continued to divide the Committee was foreign economic interests. That was a complex question for the small Territories which, while vulnerable to unprincipled foreign economic exploitation, also required foreign economic investment to maintain and enhance their economic viability in the face of the disadvantages from which they suffered. There was thus very little balance in the uniformly negative judgements recommended to the Committee in the Special Committee's draft resolution on the subject. The very title of the resolution, even in its amended form, suggested that there was something inherently shady and suspect about foreign economic investment in Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Special Committee's credibility would be much enhanced if it were to commission the Secretariat to undertake professional studies and assessments of the pattern of foreign investment in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Special Committee's recommendations could then be based on empirical evidence rather than outdated ideological assumptions, and the interests of the dependent Territories would be better served.

67. Australia attached particular importance to the situation in New Caledonia, its near neighbour, and associated itself with the remarks made by the representative of the Marshall Islands on behalf of the South Pacific Forum countries. New Caledonia represented a particularly complex decolonization situation, requiring sensitivity, cooperation and good will by all parties concerned. The interests of New Caledonia and of regional stability required a peaceful, orderly transition to genuine self-determination, in which all options, including independence, would be open, and which would safeguard the rights of the indigenous Kanaks and those of all other New Caledonians.

68. Australia had been much encouraged by the achievements recorded over the last several years under the Matignon Agreement and by the fact that the previous divisions in the Territory had given way to dialogue and consultation on the process under way. The Committee would soon be considering a draft resolution on New Caledonia adopted by consensus by the Special Committee. The resolution urged all parties to maintain their dialogue in a spirit of harmony and invited them to continue promoting a framework for the peaceful progress of the Territory towards self-determination. Australia proposed that the resolution should be adopted by consensus.

69. Mr. NASIER (Indonesia) said that it would be difficult to overestimate the vital role of the United Nations in promoting decolonization and the significant impact of the Declaration on efforts to eradicate colonialism. Thirty-eight years earlier, in 1955, the Asian-African Conference held in Bandung had provided inspiration for national independence movements on both continents. Since then, the efforts and unswerving commitment of the non-aligned movement had ushered in an era of intense struggle by all colonial peoples to exercise their right to freedom. Forty-three African and Asian nations had sponsored the draft resolution that had culminated in the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). It was to the credit of the Organization

(Mr. Nasier, Indonesia)

that, in interpreting those resolutions, it had striven to take into account the characteristics of each territory on the basis of its historical circumstances and prevailing situation.

70. Over the past three decades, much had been achieved owing to the commendable work of the Special Committee. Nevertheless, its task was not yet over. A greater effort must be made in order to complete the process of decolonization. At the initiative of the non-aligned movement, the General Assembly had proclaimed the decade beginning in 1990 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. At its 10th summit meeting, held in Jakarta in 1992, the movement of the non-aligned countries had reiterated its support for the decolonization process and the work of the Special Committee.

71. The recent seminar held in Port Moresby, in which Indonesia had participated, had reiterated that the local inhabitants must be able to exercise their inherent right to self-determination by opting for independence, free association or integration into another State. It was therefore essential for the administering Powers to create conditions fostering an awareness of those options, free of any external influences.

72. The activities of foreign economic interests were another source of continuing concern. High priority should be given to the economic and social development of the Territories and, in particular, to strengthening and diversifying their economies. The United Nations specialized agencies and other international organizations should continue their significant contribution to the political and economic development of the Territories.

73. Throughout its existence, the Special Committee had been concerned over the plight of the black population in South Africa. After decades of racial discrimination and oppression, a historic compromise had been reached between the leaders of the black majority and the minority regime to create what could be the beginning of an irreversible march towards the abolition of apartheid. It was gratifying to note that the first democratic elections would be held at the beginning of 1994, leading to the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

74. Lastly, in the context of restructuring the work of the Main Committees of the General Assembly, he hoped that the merging of the former Special Political and Fourth Committees would revitalize work on the question of decolonization and that the unfulfilled tasks of the former Fourth Committee would be carried out with vigour and determination by the new Committee.

75. Mr. MÉRIMÉE (France) said that for several years his delegation had been reporting to the Fourth Committee on the situation in New Caledonia and, mainly, on the implementation of the Matignon Agreement. The main provisions of the Agreement were based on three essential principles: the right to self-determination, decentralization and the renewed stability and development of New Caledonia in the economic and social field. With regard to the right to self-determination, the Agreement provided that in 1998 the inhabitants of New Caledonia would exercise their right to self-determination in a referendum in which only voters who had lived more than 10 years in the Territory could

(Mr. Mérimée, France)

participate. In the area of decentralization, the three provinces that New Caledonia compromised were currently being administered by leaders elected by their own inhabitants. Lastly, the Government had begun decisive action to promote the economic and social development of New Caledonia and reduce disparities, while respecting the particular characteristics of the Territory.

76. The implementation of the Agreement was evaluated by a committee that met on an annual basis in order to consider the steps taken within its framework, make the necessary adjustments and determine the priorities to be followed in the following period. The mid-period assessment had indicated that the three provinces of New Caledonia were already fully discharging the considerable responsibilities that they had been entrusted with. Their assemblies had been elected by direct universal suffrage and met periodically. Each of the provinces was deeply committed to its own development.

77. The measures taken in the economic and social field had yielded very encouraging results with regard to employment, the infrastructure, development projects, education, professional training and culture. The balance achieved in the past five years had therefore been rather satisfactory. The Government, therefore, together with the various media in New Zealand, was continuing its efforts to strengthen still further the process begun and meet new concerns that were arising in the Territory, such as the problems relating to young people, urban areas and housing.

78. Referring to the draft resolution on New Caledonia submitted to the Fourth Committee, he noted with satisfaction that at that session the text took account of the positive development of the situation in the Territory in the past five years and underscored the dialogue begun between the parties under the auspices of the French Government. Under those circumstances, his delegation was prepared, as in previous years, to refrain from opposing the text and requesting that it should be put to a vote. Nevertheless, France maintained its reservations with regard to the competence of the United Nations to consider the question. His country believed that Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations granted exclusive competence, with regard to the determination of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, to the States that had the responsibility to administer those Territories and that no General Assembly resolution had modified the Charter with regard to that question. Since his delegation considered that the question of New Caledonia was the exclusive responsibility of France, it could not support the adoption of a United Nations text on the question.

79. With regard to the questions raised at an earlier meeting by the representative of the Front de libération nationale kanak socialiste, he pointed out that the modalities for holding the referendum would be determined sufficiently in advance so that it could be carried out in a transparent manner and, in conclusion, said that the French authorities were determined to continue to apply the voluntarist policy instituted in order to promote the process initiated through the Matignon Agreement so that the inhabitants of New Caledonia could exercise their right to self-determination under the best conditions in 1998.

80. Mr. KATABARWA (Uganda) acknowledged the positive contribution made by the Committee to the changes that had taken place in South Africa. For that reason, he urged the international community to continue to focus attention on developments in that country until a united, democratic and non-racial society was achieved there.

81. It was regrettable that Western Sahara continued to be a cause of concern for the international community. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to note the possibility that the direct talks begun between the parties in July might resume in the not-too-distant future. Uganda, furthermore, reiterated its position that the acceptable solution to the problem of Western Sahara was to hold a referendum on self-determination without further delay, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991), and that OAU and the Secretary-General should play an important role in that regard to ensure that the two parties negotiated in good faith and in a transparent manner.

82. The petitions heard from Non-Self-Governing Territories confirmed the need for the Committee to work with more resolve to implement the Declaration on decolonization before the century ended. The report of the Special Committee showed that its working relations with the administering Powers had improved. Uganda urged the administering Powers which did not participate in the Special Committee's work to reconsider their position and take the necessary measures to hasten the decolonization and independence of the peoples under their administration.

83. Mr. AL-ATTAR (Syrian Arab Republic) said that at the time of the founding of the United Nations the main concern had been to prevent war, maintain security and put an end to slavery and colonialism. The United Nations had not succeeded in preventing war or maintaining collective security, but it had achieved a major success in decolonization. Since the adoption of resolution 1514 (XV) in 1960 more than 80 colonies had attained independence and joined the United Nations as sovereign States. However, the decolonization process had not yet ended and priority must therefore be given to the item, as was demonstrated by the resolution on the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Palestine was still under Israeli occupation and there were still 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories. The work of the Special Committee would not end until colonialism had been totally eliminated and the Palestinian people had succeeded in exercising all its rights.

84. In the case of South Africa it was important to apply the relevant resolutions in order to ensure that South Africa became a free and non-racial State.

85. The administering Powers must create favourable conditions for the Non-Self-Governing Territories to be able to determine their political and economic status in the future. They must also support political education programmes so that the peoples under their administration could gain a clearer idea of their right to self-determination. In addition, the administering Powers must help to strengthen the economic independence of the Territories and respect the interests of their indigenous peoples.

(Mr. Al-Attar, Syrian Arab Republic)

86. The activities of foreign economic interests were harmful by their very nature and prevented the colonial peoples from expressing their wishes by political means, in accordance with the Declaration on decolonization.

87. Mr. ALLEM (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, although there were only a few Non-Self-Governing Territories left in the world, they were of great importance for the Committee. The General Assembly had adopted resolutions reaffirming the right of all peoples to determine their own future in total freedom. In several regions of the world many territories had achieved independence and joined the United Nations. However, colonialism had not been totally eradicated and its vestiges were manifest in the continued subjugation and occupation suffered by the Palestinian people.

88. Where South Africa was concerned, the efforts of the United Nations to help the region to establish a non-racial democracy were to be commended; however, the situation in South Africa must be monitored closely because there were still a number of obstacles to the attainment of that objective.

89. The United Nations must consolidate the political and economic base of the Non-Self-Governing Territories so that they could achieve their independence without prior conditions being set. In addition, the Territories must not be used for the deployment or stockpiling of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

90. In its resolutions the General Assembly had reaffirmed that the natural resources of the Non-Self-Governing Territories belonged to their peoples and that their exploitation was a crime against those peoples and a direct violation of their human rights. The General Assembly had recommended that the activities of foreign economic interests must not be allowed to harm the Territories which had still not become independent. Furthermore, such activities must not be used as a pretext for delaying the attainment of independence.

91. Mr. CHAMBERS (International Labour Organization) said that the International Labour Organization (ILO) had thought it best to provide the detailed information in writing concerning ILO activities in individual Non-Self-Governing Territories which the members of the Committee could consult in the lengthy report which was available in the meeting room. It was regrettable that the report was only in English. It also contained omissions with regard to certain Territories which the Committee was considering owing both to a lack of information on the part of ILO and to the fact that ILO used in its Constitution the term "non-metropolitan territories", which did not always mean exactly the same as the term "Non-Self-Governing Territories" used by the United Nations.

92. The work of ILO had two aspects: normative and technical. On the normative side, the multilateral treaties known as international labour conventions were applicable, in their own terms and within the framework of the ILO Constitution, to the non-metropolitan territories. A positive development in recent years had been the increasing participation of governmental and non-governmental representatives of non-metropolitan territories in the

(Mr. Chambers, ILO)

discussion and adoption of new ILO conventions and recommendations at the annual sessions of the International Labour Conference. They also participated in the ILO procedures for monitoring compliance with ratified instruments.

93. The modalities for the application of international labour conventions to non-metropolitan territories was set out in article 35 of the ILO Constitution. Once a convention had been declared applicable to a non-metropolitan territory, the governmental authorities of the territory and the metropolitan State were under an obligation to provide regular reports on the implementation of the provisions of the instrument in the territory. Under standing inter-organizational arrangements and subject to certain conditions, such information could be transmitted to the United Nations Secretariat, but up to the present little use had been made of that avenue.

94. The ILO monitoring procedures did not limit it to reporting on the situation in relation to the application of its instruments in a given non-metropolitan territory but also allowed it to request further information in order, for example, to verify the implementation of recommendations of technical cooperation projects and to seek information about the Government's plans and intentions for the future, provided that they related to the convention's subject-matter. In that context closer collaboration between the Committee and the ILO supervisory bodies would work to the benefit of both parts of the system and, even more importantly, to the benefit of the territories themselves. ILO was ready to cooperate fully with the United Nations along those lines.

95. ILO was also engaged in a large programme of technical assistance extending not only to its sovereign member States but also to Non-Self-Governing Territories, and it had responded favourably, within the limits of its competence and capacity, to all requests from such territories for technical assistance.

96. Another aspect of ILO's work which might be of interest to the Fourth Committee related to human rights. In particular, non-metropolitan territories could benefit from the complaint procedures established by ILO with regard to matters such as freedom of association and discrimination. By virtue of the constitutional obligations undertaken by Member States on joining the Organization, non-metropolitan territories could make such complaints regardless of whether the metropolitan Power had or had not ratified the relevant Conventions.

97. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) recalled that the principles enunciated in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted in 1960, were based on the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Because of the struggle of the international community under the leadership of the United Nations, over 130 countries had since then gained independence and succeeded in exercising their right to self-determination, and the number of Members of the United Nations had grown from 51 to 184 States.

98. The struggle to eliminate the remaining vestiges of colonialism was entering its final phase. There were still 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories, but Pakistan hoped that, very shortly, perhaps before the end of the century, the United Nations work on decolonization would have been concluded.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

99. That positive trend had been accompanied, however, by one in the opposite direction: the resurgence of ambitions for domination and expansion and, in some cases, denial of the right to self-determination. A case in point was the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The basic principle for the political solution of such conflicts should consist of enabling the peoples concerned to exercise their right to self-determination without outside intervention or coercion, since suppression of that right constituted a violation of a fundamental human right and a threat to international peace and security.

100. It was necessary for the administering Powers to adopt the measures needed to promote the political, economic, social, cultural and educational advancement of the peoples of those Territories, thereby facilitating their exercise of the right to self-determination. The administering Powers and all Member States of the United Nations should take care to see that foreign interests did not unduly exploit the Territories' natural resources, which were the patrimony of the indigenous populations.

101. The recent events in South Africa could be an indication that the twenty-first century would usher in a world free of colonialism. Pakistan fully supported the multiparty negotiations taking place in South Africa, but emphasized that the continuation of violence in the country was grounds for concern. The elections set for April 1994 should be held on time and should be conducted in a free and fair manner. Extremist elements on both sides must not be allowed to delay South Africa's transition to democratic rule.

102. Mr. ARKWRIGHT (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, in his statement on behalf of the Rio Group, the representative of Chile had expressed the wish for a solution to be found to the sovereignty dispute over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). The position of his own Government on those matters was well known.

103. Mr. GUEL (India), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Committee's mandate covered only Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unfortunately, the representative of Pakistan had violated the sanctity of the Committee to revert, completely out of context, to a question which was not on the Committee's agenda. Pakistan was using propaganda techniques to conceal its intention to impugn Indian sovereignty and territorial integrity. It was important to distinguish between a genuine expression of popular feeling and the encouragement through force and terror of the extreme views of groups with no popular support. In some non-colonial situations, the concept of self-determination had been abused in order to advance the extremist demands of armed separatist groups.

104. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his reference to the question of Kashmir had not been out of context because it was related to decolonization. That had been proved, stated and extensively reaffirmed in several United Nations resolutions. It was an unresolved question, dating from 1947, and was therefore within the Committee's terms of reference.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

105. Kashmir was a Territory in dispute, as the Security Council and India itself had recognized by holding many negotiation sessions with Pakistan on the question. Contrary to what the representative of India had said, it was not a unilateral claim because it appeared in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in which it was very clearly stated that the future of Kashmir would be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the Territory through an impartial plebiscite sponsored by the United Nations.

106. There was indeed a colonial situation in Kashmir. The struggle of the people for their right to self-determination was identical with the struggle of liberation movements in other parts of the world that had led to the establishment of independent States.

107. Mr. GUEL (India), again speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that what Pakistan had just said was an oft-repeated distortion of the real situation that was not worthy of comment. He would merely say that the right to self-determination could not be used in respect of a territory that was part of a country. Kashmir was not a territory under colonial occupation. Had Pakistan granted the people of that part of Kashmir which it had occupied the right to self-determination? Pakistan had cut off the northern area, contrary to all constitutional precepts.

108. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan), again speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his earlier remarks were nothing but the truth. The situation in the Pakistani sector of Kashmir, which was not occupied, was in keeping with the resolutions of the Security Council. Pakistan was waiting for a positive reply from India to its invitations to hold a free and impartial plebiscite. It was not true that Pakistan had taken steps to annex the northern part of Kashmir, which was being administered under a separate arrangement while the solution to the question of Kashmir continued to be pending.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

109. The CHAIRMAN said that, at its next meeting, the Committee would also take up items 89, Science and peace, and 90, Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations. The list of speakers on both items was open. A draft resolution had been submitted on item 83, Effects of atomic radiation, in document A/C.4/48/L.2 and one on item 89, in document A/C.4/48/L.3. If he heard no objection, the debate on items 89 and 90 would be closed at the meeting on Monday, 18 October.

110. It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.